



Apprenticeship Pathways Act of 2023

Sponsored by Senator Heinrich and Senator Moran

There is an urgent need to increase apprenticeship pathways for high school students, particularly in response to workforce shortages in the building trades, manufacturing, and healthcare. According to recent reports, the construction industry is projected to face a 546,000 shortage of skilled workers in 2023 in the United States alone¹. By expanding apprenticeship programs for high school students, we can help bridge these gaps and ensure a sustainable workforce pipeline. Apprenticeships offer a direct path to acquiring in-demand skills, and early exposure to these industries can encourage more students to pursue careers in construction trades or healthcare professions. By addressing these workforce shortages through apprenticeships, we not only meet the immediate needs of these sectors but also provide students with rewarding and stable career opportunities.

The Apprenticeship Pathway Act of 2023 (APA) aims to build the relationship between the classroom and the workforce by creating opportunities for young students to engage in career pathways and develop career skillsets. The APA directs the Secretary of Labor to enter into contracts with workforce intermediaries who would serve as the conduit between an employer and a secondary school to establish apprenticeship programs based on local, regional, and national workforce trends. This model exposes students to on-the-job training and instruction, real-world experiences and responsibilities, and inspiring career pathways ahead of their entrance to the workforce.

Unlike traditional school models, industry intermediaries have the capacity to work with employers to identify and address workforce trends. The industry intermediaries develop the relationships with employers, recruit students and facilitating their transitions to apprenticeships, and provide wraparound services to oversee their development and progress while engaging in career pathways. The APA focuses on apprenticeship development for occupations with high need, including the building trades, healthcare, manufacturing, technology, telecommunications, and early childhood education.

This legislative proposal was developed in partnership with Future Focused Education.

¹ <https://www.abc.org/News-Media/News-Releases/entryid/19777/construction-workforce-shortage-tops-half-a-million-in-2023-says-abc>